

Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the TEAC Committee  
May 27, 2010, 11:00-2:00 p.m.  
SCORE Conference Room

**In Attendance:**

Tim Webb, Commissioner of Education  
Jennifer Vranek, Education First  
Katie Cour, Education First  
Erin O'Hara, Governor's Office  
Patty Kiddy, McNairy County School System  
Pam East, Murfreesboro City Schools  
David Sevier (for Gary Nixon), State Board of Education

Judy Stewart, Franklin County School System  
Jill Levine, Hamilton County School System  
Mike Edwards, Knoxville Chamber  
Darrell Freeman, Davidson County  
Kenny Lou Heaton, Carter County School System  
Amanda Anderson, TDOE  
Tomeka Hart, Shelby County  
Jesse Register, Metro Nashville Public School

**Introduction:**

Commissioner Webb welcomed members of the TEAC committee and introduced Jennifer Vranek, from Education First, who will facilitate future meetings of the TEAC committee.

Ms. Vranek gave the committee an overview of where they were in the process to date. She then explained that the focus of today's meeting was to determine acceptable sources for student achievement for the five educator categories: Teachers without TVAAS, Library Media Specialists, Special Groups and Principals. These acceptable sources would comprise the 35% growth measure for teachers without TVAAS.

Ms. Cour revisited and defined the "criteria": components, acceptable sources, and weights. She explained the format of the meeting, which would consist of a large group discussion, two small group break outs after lunch and then groups reports back to the larger group. Ms. Cour then told the group that the plan was to discuss the "other 15%" in two weeks and the "15% observation" after that.

Ms. Vranek said that the 1<sup>st</sup> update, stressing that it is only an update, to the State Board of Education (SBE) would be soon and while it is soon they realize how important it is not to rush the process. She then presented the five options for acceptable sources for the 35% growth measure for non-TVAAS educators.

**35% Growth Acceptable Sources: Non-TVAAS Educators:**

Ms. Vranek introduced the five options:

1. Single Growth Measure
2. Menu of options
3. Local Flexibility
4. School Value Added

5. Any combination of the above five

Ms. Vranek explained that in option 1, the state would mandate and pay for individual, predetermined growth measures that districts must use for all educators. Over time, new assessments would be adopted or developed for all areas that do not currently have valid measures (special groups, librarians, teachers in untested subjects and grades, principals).

**Option 1:**

Ms. Vranek explained that option 1 was a single growth measure option- meaning that the state would require all districts to use the same growth measure for each type of educator (which would total somewhere around 334). This option assumes that the state will develop or purchase assessments for that purpose in those areas where growth measures don't exist. To exemplify option 1, Ms. Vranek discussed the work being done by Florida's MAP Program and the state of Louisiana.

In Florida the state allows districts to define teacher performance based on student learning gains or student proficiency levels. The state provides flexibility to define teacher performance based on individual performance or performance teams.

In Louisiana, they are working with an external partner to create new pre- and post-tests to fulfill Single Growth Measure option. This plan includes a "Phase 2," that will explore whether there are better measurement alternatives based on teacher effectiveness research.

Ms. Vranek then explained the pros and cons to option 1.

- Pros:
  - It provides consistency and portability across districts and ensures that all educators are held accountable to the same measure, it's valid and reliable.
  - She also explained that this option had specificity in that educators would have specific assessments tailored to their content areas and responsibilities.
- Cons
  - This option is very expensive.
  - It's also unclear whether the district would be required to pay for implementation, or whether the state would pay for both development and implementation. Either way, the cost is enormous.
  - "Doable Factor": It would take a lot of time to develop accurate and valid measures. Examples of assessments for some categories of non-classroom educators do not exist and would be challenging to develop. It's doubtful that the state could prepare this and roll it out in the short period of time period before the evaluation launch next summer.
  - It is constricting and does not allow room for district innovation

Ms. Vranek then asked if anyone had questions about option 1's single growth measure.

Mr. Edwards did not think a state system would necessarily constrict districts. He said that the state could provide standards and districts could go above and beyond those. He reminded the committee that there will be significant costs either way, whether it is at the state or the district level. He mentioned that districts are already are probably at a greater disadvantage to create assessments with their more limited funds. He stressed that the TEAC committee can't just choose the cheapest option, stating that that going that route would make the entire process flawed.

Ms. Vranek agreed and told the committee that they can't focus on cost alone. State has to select from pre-approved options. She then explained "Option 2."

**Option 2:**

Ms. Vranek said that the TEAC could consider option 2, developing a menu of measures that districts can select from, similar to what DC and New Haven have done. This would mean that the state would prepare a list of measures that districts can use per type of educator; for example, K-2 educators would all be choosing from a specific K-2 menu, while teachers in untested subjects like art or PE would have a different menu to select from. The pros for this option would be that districts have some flexibility in determining the most appropriate measures for their teachers, while still preventing the "anything goes" mentality. The cons include cost again – what if a district does not currently use anything on the menu? It also may hinder innovation for those districts developing their own reliable and valid measures. It's also unclear whether the district would be required to pay for implementation, or whether the state would pay for both development and implementation. Either way, the cost is enormous. Also, it takes time to develop accurate and valid measures. It's doubtful that the state could do this in such a short time period to prepare for the evaluation launch next summer

Mr. Edwards asked where certain tests don't exist. Ms. Cour said that there are no student assessments to evaluate guidance counselors.

Ms. East said that she did research and that she found that every instructor has standards and expectations, even in broad categories. Ms. Vranek said that this is true, but that standards do not mean an assessment exists.

Mr. Edwards said that the standards are vague, and used a social worker with a case load that exceeds the limit as an example.

Ms. Heaton said that it was her understanding that the legislation required student achievement data be based on growth. She asked who determines growth, the department of education or Dr. Sanders?

Ms. Vranek said that the committee needs to look at examples, because it varies. David Sevier said that districts can be innovative and that the menu can be malleable because the State Board of Education has traditionally been open to innovations. Ms. Vranek said that each category would have state approved menu and that decisions about what is appropriate would be made at the local level. Locals would decide if it is portfolios, etc. Stressing that this would not be about point in time piece of data, it would be take atleast two points in time to see the growth students make.

Ms. Heaton said that it is important to have checks and balances for the purpose of teacher accountability. Saying that some teachers would love option that lets them sneak by.

Ms. Vranek asked the committee to think about how feasible it is to evaluate. She asked the teachers on the committee to comment on what they are currently using and how they are tracked. Ms. Kiddy said that they use Thinklink, STAR, and their principal evaluates by hand.

Ms. Stewart was not familiar STAR but said that the evaluation currently used by her system is inconsistent- some children showed no growth because they came in with high scores, while other children came in with high scores and took different test and showed growth.

Ms. Vranek said that this is in part a policy decision- what makes a teacher effective, how much growth do they have to show?

Ms. Levine said that it is challenging to show what is developmentally appropriate. She said that in her system, Thinklink has sent back wrong scores and that no one could show that tests administered in November and December were comparable. She said that the tests were not necessarily accurate. She said that they have used Dibels for reading and that students were given timed tests which included words that did and did not exist and that in many cases bright students were penalized for not being quick. She expressed a concern that teachers would start just "teaching to the test" which would not help children develop good reading skills. She foresees a danger in putting standardized tradition test at PreK-2 level. She asked the committee to think about what this will do to instruction, time and quality of time in class.

Ms. Stewart said that STAR is more reliable.

Ms. Levine said that --- level benchmarks are the most reliable. She said that it has worked for her, but is not sure how it would work statewide.

Ms. Vranek said that quality, accuracy, reliability and purpose are most important considerations.

Ms. Levine said that Dibels does measure growth, attendance, along with other factors.

Ms. East was concerned that the test will be the assessment and stressed that tests and assessments serve very different purposes. An assessment is meant to take someone from one point to another, and is meant to help a teacher to identify strengths and weaknesses of a student. Ms. East uses Thinklink- and said that it is 80-90% accurate to measure growth. She has used it for several years and has only caught one error. She

said that there is a significant amount of training required of teachers using Thinklink which helps keep things accurate. She said that if 35% is growth and 15% is achievement, educators will need benchmarks.

Ms. Vranek said that it will be necessary to note implementation challenges and to select appropriate assessments. She then asked Ms. Cour to discuss DC's "Impact Model."

### **DC- Impact Program**

Ms. Cour explained that DC is using a menu of options for non-TVAAS teachers, similar to the district and unit assessments we saw earlier. They have developed individual evaluation rubrics for 20 different staff types and will be expanding existing state tests to include more subjects and grades over time. They allow teachers to select pre and post tests which comprise 90% of entire evaluation model. They realize what it is to use teacher and district based decisions. She explained that more information can be made available per-request of committee members.

### **Option 3:**

Ms. Vranek explained that the third option for TEAC to consider is the local flexibility option, which would require the state to develop a protocol for districts to develop their own measures, and also a protocol to approve the measures. The pros to this approach include allowing districts flexibility and the ability to innovate, it's also a practical option based on the tight timeline. However, she said that are significant cons- including issues with consistency, reliability, and validity, and issues with developing an appropriate protocol for districts. She asked if anyone had questions around the local flexibility option.

Mr. Edwards asked what this model looks like.

Ms. Vranek said that it would require a rough audit of about 10% of districts to be reviewed by the state, to check and see if districts were doing the right thing.

Mr. Edwards said that if hiring, retention, termination, and tenure decisions were riding on this and this is a subjective, random sampling by the state, it might not live up to the intent of the law and legislation. He said the rubric and protocol must be really high quality before approval.

Ms. Cour asked TEAC to consider what it is would require of districts to create own measures.

Dr. Register was worried that districts would not have the capacity to do this. He said that it is hard for metro and he has great research staff. He said that he is bias, but thinks that it is important that this instrument is not perceived as an instrument to terminate teachers. This instrument is about improving practice. He said that this might be 15-20% of a decision to remove teachers. If he would dismiss a teacher, he would be

need a lot more to consider and long meetings with their lawyers. He said that TEAC can't develop an instrument that is an effective way to dismiss teachers. Mr. Edwards responded that a great evaluation should show a teachers strengths and weaknesses. And that at some point this will be used to decide a termination.

Ms. Vranek said that the evaluation would show who needs assistance, who would be a great coach, etc. while "Human Capital" decisions would still be done at the local level. She said that the TEAC needs to decide quality measures and that it is the job of TEAC to pay attention to quality and use.

Ms. Ballard said that the new law states that the evaluation will be a factor in all decisions. A Director would sit down with board attorney and look at many factors. Mr. Edwards said that currently Tennessee has teacher evaluation system in place and that job performance is a factor while the evaluation is rarely a significant factor in dismissing a teacher. He said that, moving forward, the evaluation needs be a significant factor in the dismissal process.

Ms. Steward said that the law needs to push the envelope. The evaluations need to improve teachers but also expedite dismissal.

Mr. Edwards said that it is the overall goal of the committee to improve teachers because dismissal is costly.

Ms. Hart said that there are existing laws about how to dismiss a teacher and that this process helps determine and communicate which one of the three areas a teacher fits into. This process should show that districts communicated to teachers how to improve and then justify why they are dismissed.

Dr. Register said that the evaluation needs to be good first step, but just a first step.

Mr. Edwards said that it is also necessary to justify rewards and incentive, and there should be clearer justifications.

Ms. Vranek agreed and said that it is TEAC's job to justify. If we don't justify and differentiate instruction then it is not useful. It is our charge to see which framework best shows growth.

Mr. Sevier did not see the difference between options 2 & 3, because if rejected by the State Board, then they are the same.

Ms. Cour said that any of the options can be merged. It just makes mores sense to describe each option separately.

Mr. Sevier said that districts should be able to use a neighboring district's good assessments if they work.

Ms. Vranek explained that there is broad flexibility for districts to buy-in. There are a lot of opportunities for educators to come together in a building or class level to decide what is appropriate. We want to encourage collaboration

Ms. Vranek returned to Mr. Edwards' question of "what Option 3 looks like." She said that on the "Quality Control" side- there would be a lot of additionally required PD and training. It would essentially look like:

- Educators- developing learning objects together

- Districts- developing matrices for portfolios
- Districts – developing own assessments

Brad Smith then explained the Austin-REACH program to the committee. Austin and Denver teachers make menus of options (test, portfolio), and teachers set goals and are monitored over time period. They have had good buy-in and instruction. Challenges exist with implementation and reliability. The process is lengthy, so they must have well trained teachers to do this at the state level. There is a review process, training at school level and a management system of groups across state that reviews things. Mr. Edwards said that big districts could do that, but it would be difficult for small districts.

Mr. Smith said that teachers have extensive training which requires a lot of support. Management tries to review student learning objectives and the outside reviewers need two weeks to review- which is not a significant amount of time. They have been doing this for 3 years. They use it for compensation, not evaluation. They are not yet sure how it correlates with observation rubrics. They have seen some correlation with state tests. They have not tested for rigor, but teachers and principals like it and feel that it is effective.

#### **Option 4:**

Ms. Vranek explained that option 4 would use a school's value-added growth measure as the growth component for all categories of educators. The benefits are that it promotes collaboration with everyone responsible for school wide performance. It is also the most feasible of all options, in that it takes advantage of the system already in place and would only require fine tuning. The negatives are: the opportunity for inequality and the possible disincentives this system could create. Firstly, an effective teacher in bad school might be penalized for low school V.A, while a bad teacher in a good school could skate by. This choice might also put more emphasis on tested-subjects because they are the subjects by which school wide value-added are judged. Dr. Webb said that the law talks about V.A. where available and comparable growth data- which is a huge list. That brought up the issue of differentiation- if one subset's growth is measured in one way by a hugely tested scientific institute, while some other subset developed locally. He stated that while this is a challenge, he prefers this method.

Dr. Register said that it depends on what were using this for. Is there a fundamental difference in evaluation for performance pay and one for dismissal? For example, if I'm a first grade teacher, do I want to be dismissed by my schools poor VA score?

Mr. Edwards asked if out of 35%, 5 % school wide (not sure of exact %'s). He also wanted to know if there would be a legacy issue – i.e., if a student gets to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and can't read, would the 3<sup>rd</sup> teacher be penalized for having that student? He feels that it is important for all teachers to have a skin in the game

Dr. Register said that PreK-2 need ownership is 3-5 test scores.

Ms. East said that she is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and that her head is on the chopping block. Everyone needs to be accountable and maybe we need to break up TVAAS and make it 20% and 15% for non- TVAAS.

Mr. Wiman (from the gallery) added that the most powerful piece in improving student achievement is collaboration. He said that he was a principal and said that in his experience, no individual evaluation needs to be done as a team with a goal. He does not believe it is comparable to have one set of teachers with growth measures and other subset with evaluation based on school VA. In 9 region meetings TEA noted that the majority of librarians said they need to be held accountable for what they do and not what everyone does. He is concerned with whole groups of people being judged by school-wide VA scores.

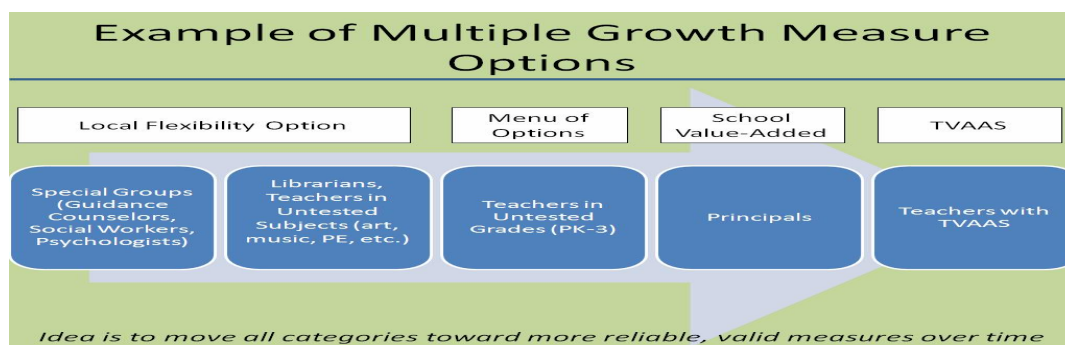
#### Option 5:

Ms. Vranek then explained that option 5 was one of multiple options for multiple teachers. Single growth measure option for PK-3, flexible menu for those in untested subjects, school wide V.A as an acceptable source for all educators, and school wide VA as the sole source for principals. She said that over time menu could change and more options could be added and taken away. This option is similar to what New Haven is doing and is more of a catch-all.

Ms. Cour added that in New Haven- teachers and administrators jointly decide what growth measure the teacher will use. They are developing single assessment for many areas which will take some time. Principals are using school wide V.A. This meets the individual needs of all educators and they are able to do this with the help of the New Teacher Project.

Mr. Edwards asked if we could sample their assessments.

Ms. Vranek said yes, but wanted the TEAC members to understand where there was and was not flexibility:



#### Tuesday Call Re-Brief:

Ms. Vranek then summarized what members on the Tuesday (5/25/10) TEAC call suggested:

- Excluding option 1
- Blending Options 2& 3

- Option 4 is essential for principal
- Option 4 should be be some part of most educators' (if not all) evaluations

Mr. Sevier said that there needs to be a default of a local district that chooses not to act.

### **Summary**

Ms. Vranek asked TEAC to comment on what patterns or themes they are encourage or concerned by. Mr. Edwards said that he is afraid that if TEAC can not attach how to implement and executed as part of evaluation it will be ineffective. He said that what makes Austin work is strong accountability and training for educators. He believes that if the TEAC just puts out a menu they haven't done much to change the current system. Ms. Hart said that she is excited about the possibility of changing how education is delivered. She commented that if we can't measure an educators performance, then do perhaps we don't need that type of educator. She does not want the committee confined to a box. They need to know what works for librarians and evaluate them based on that.

Ms. Vranek said that the evaluation should tell what is working and not to drive best practices in the system.

Ms. Levine asked TEAC to consider how a principal evaluates each teacher differently based on time. She stressed that this committee is developing a new way that we observe and evaluate and that doing things the same way across the board might get them the buy-in they need.

Ms. Vranek said that it is important to balance simplicity and capacity.

Ms. Levine wanted to echo Ms. Hart's earlier comments.

Dr. Register agreed, but reminded TEAC that there is a reason why K-2 is not standardized and measured. He also said that there is not a lot of data at the high school level and for that reason it ought to be easier to measure them.

Mr. Parker (from the National Board for Teaching Standards) gallery observer explained to TEAC that the National Board has 5 core propositions and put standards together for all subjects. He said that these standards are directly related to student learning. He mentioned that his colleague works in Austin and that he has been reminded that it is teacher (not student) standards that are being considered. He stressed that teacher behavior needs to change for students to learn differently, all of which is 1st piece. Austin uses the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece; there they collect evidence about what teachers bring to the table and what moves them from one point to another.

Dr. Webb told the committee that he was in Washington, DC on Tuesday at an assessment consortium and that Tennessee was one of 27 states in Achieve consortium. By 2014, this consortium will have common assessments online, assessments that will eventually be summative and cumulative. This will change adaptive assessments and pre-K-2. TEAC needs to ensure that it builds in the capacity to make that leap to delivered assessments. He said that \$350M has been committed to this effort and that Tennessee is one of the Consortium's governing states.

Dr. Register asked which experts were working on this.

Dr. Webb said that it was most of the major think tanks including: ETS, ACT, etc.

Dr. Register asked if this then is interim process.

MS. Vranek said that this process is more than interim, in that it will inform the larger process- and while it will not cover all educators it will cover the majority of core educators.

It is important that this lower cost, encourage competition, and it must measure achievement and student growth.

## **Lunch Break**

### **Group Sessions:**

Group 1: Freeman, Sevier, Register, Stewart, Hart, Heaton- (facilitator: Vranek)  
East, Kiddy, Levine, Edwards- group 2 (Cour)

#### **Group 1: on Non- Teachers**

Mr. Edwards talked to Knox county teachers in art, theatre, etc about creating a performance rubric for beginning and end of year. Those teachers thought that it would be easier to do for their type of teaching than for a counselor, librarian, etc.

#### **Group 2: Teachers in Untested- Grades**

Pam East presented for group 2 and said that they liked option 2 with 2 ideas:

- TVAAS be entire 35%- k-3 would assume average of school,
- Or break it up 20/15- 20% would be a flexible list that would give teachers buy-in or 20/15 state uses Dibels or prescribes model.

Ms. Cour said that the state would prescribe for those who do not come up with their own model.

Mr. Sevier said that there are PK-2 assessments that are forthcoming

Ms. Vranek added that they are already in practice across the nation

#### **Group 2: Principals**

35% school wide V.A. They said that perhaps down the road there might be flexibility for other factors to be included like growth for teachers in non-tested. For now focus TEAC should focus on the 40% that is tested.

#### **Group 1: Special Groups**

Mr. Sevier said that their group did not have any recommendations for special groups because they are too complicated and splintered.

Ms. Vranek said that they could still develop learning objectives and development tools, but that it might be important for TEAC to engage with national partners and researchers.

Dr. Register reiterated that Instructional Specialists & School Librarians should be as responsible as anyone for school wide VA. They should be supporting teachers and student achievement.

Mr. Sevier suggested disaggregating teachers in special groups.

Ms. Vranek asked for final reactions and acknowledged that the group may need to learn more about the potential option of disaggregating data, and to do that they will need to hear from experts like Dr. Sanders and SAS.

Ms. O'Hara invited TEAC members to the June 5<sup>th</sup> Educators Summit which will bring together a diverse collection of 200 educators from across the state. The governor will make welcoming remarks and the teachers will break into smaller groups to discuss and distill their thoughts on the evaluation. She invited committee members to attend, facilitate, observe and participate.

Ms. Cour told TEAC that they have will likely have a conference call this week. She said that she will communicate and disseminate that invitation.

Ms. Vranek added that anytime TEAC members want to give offline feedback to please contact Jennifer or Katie.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:57pm CDT